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Washington Roundup

MX Basing Study

The Reagan Administration MX advanced ICBM blue ribbon basing panel headed by retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, former national security adviser to the President, is moving toward a package of compromise recommendations for missile basing. These are: place 50 MXs in Minuteman silos at Francis E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, Wyo., the deepest Minuteman silos; simultaneously continue detailed theoretical and experimental studies of closely spaced basing with deceptive capsules or accelerate an experimental test program for superhardened capsules for closely spaced basing, and conduct active research and development on the small ICBM (AW&ST May 4, 1981, p. 49). The small ICBM concept originally was proposed by Boeing. The small ballistic missile development, according to an official associated with the group, is not inconsistent with deep underground basing in the early 1990s. The Scowcroft panel is receiving briefings from special counselors who include former Defense secretaries Harold Brown, James Schlesinger, Melvin Laird, Donald Rumsfeld; former secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance; former under secretary of Defense for research and engineering William Perry; former CIA chief John McCone; William VanCleve, former Reagan Administration transition team leader in the Pentagon, and retired Army Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Prof. Charles Townes briefed the Scowcroft group last week. Brown resigned from the panel, citing a conflict of interest with his job as a consultant for TRW, Inc.